

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method of protecting a silica-containing article used in the manufacture of an optical fiber includes the step of applying to the silica-containing article a protective layer that facilitates removal of particulates that deposit on the protective layer and that ablates during or can be removed before subsequent processing of the silica-containing article. An intermediate product used in the manufacture of an optical fiber and protected against break-inducing particulates includes a silica-containing article, and a protective layer that facilitates removal of particulates that have deposited on the protective layer and that can be ablated during or removed before subsequent processing of the intermediate product.